

Play constructive role PM asks trade union leaders

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged trade union leaders to play more constructive role in line with national and international realities to help industrialisation, increase productivity and establish just rights of workers.

She made the call on the eve of historic May Day, while addressing a function as part of a two-day programme undertaken by the labour and employment Ministry in observance of the May Day at Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

The prime minister called upon all to work unitedly by sinking all differences to help people come out of the vicious cycle of poverty. She stressed the need for cordial worker-employer relations for rapid industrialisation and boosting productivity.

Khaleda said the recommendations of the Wage Commission would be implemented soon, as the cabinet has very recently approved it.

She said her government formed Pay Commission and Wage Commission despite resource constraints, and the recommendations of the Pay Commission have been implemented.

The prime minister expressed the optimism that the nation will be able to attain prosperity through tapping its



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia speaks at a discussion marking the May Day at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday.

potential resources. "Our future is promising. We want to make our present vibrant with work and make the future bright and prosperous taking inspiration from our glorious past," she told the function.

"So all will have to work together, forgetting all differences, otherwise the country cannot come out of the vicious cycle of poverty," she

observed. State Minister for Labour and Employment Amanullah Aman MP presided over the function. Syed Manjur Elahi, president of Bangladesh Employers Federation, General Secretary of Jatiyatabadi Stramk Dal Md Zafrul Hasan and ILO representative Gopal Bhattacharyya also spoke at the function.

Tribute paid to Nasreen Huq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different social, women and human rights organisations gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday to pay tribute to late Nasreen Pervin Huq, country director of ActionAid.

Observing one-minute silence in respect of her soul, the meeting was followed by recalling memories by her family members, relatives and her near ones of the organisations with which Nasreen was engaged.

Moderator of the programme Actress Sara Zaker read out a paper illustrating Nasreen's contribution in different fields including women and children health, and human rights.

The paper read Nasreen was an internationally renowned personality and people around the world are mourning for her. Condolence meetings are being held in 42 cities in seven continents of the globe, it added.

The speakers recalled her role protesting declaration of Islam as state religion by eighth amendment of the constitution in 1988.

Hundreds of social activists, educationists, intellectuals and students across the country took part in the meeting organised by ActionAid, Nijera Kori, Ain O Shalish Kendra, Naripakkha, Nari Maitri, Mohila Parishad and Gonoshastha Kendra.

A group of acid victims sang songs in memory of Nasreen who helped them in many ways with her own earning.

Lazina Muna, sister of late young pilot Faria Lara who died in a plane crash during her training, recited an elegy composed by Nasreen on the occasion of Lara's tragic death.

The function ended with lighting up of candles at the pedestal of the Shaheed Minar praying salvation of her departed soul and welfare for the humankind.

Sechchasebok Dal activist killed in N'ganj

BSS, Narayanganj

A Sechchasebok Dal activist was stabbed to death by his rivals near Ahsan Ullah Super Market at Murapara Market under Sonargaon upazila of the district on Saturday.

Police identified the victim as Mirza Salahuddin Ritu, 30, son of Abdur Rouf of village Habibpur of the same upazila.

He was attacked by his rivals numbering 10 to 15 when he was going home after completing his day's work at his shop at Murapara.

Sonargaon police recovered the mutilated body and sent it to morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with Sonargaon police in this connection. No was arrested in this connection, the sources said.

2nd raffle draw of 'Coca-Cola Fun Island' held

The second raffle draw of "Coca-Cola Fun Island" under the Crown Programme 2006 was held on Saturday at Tabani Beverage Company Ltd under the guidance of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust, says a press release.

Names of seven people were announced as winners of the raffle draw.

They are Md Wahed Ali, S/o Nabab Ali of village Dighulia under Tangail district, Sheikh Shahajahan Ali, S/o late Sheikh Abul Hossain, Abul Hotel, Basundia More, village Basundia under Kotwali Police Station in Jessore, Abdul Aleem, Muslim Fast Food, 7 No. Masjid Market, Asadgate, Mirpur Road, Dhaka, Anghuman Sen Gupta, C/o Liton Deb, 50, Narinda Road, Dhaka, Ghorer Chowa Restaurant, 6/Kha-1/15, Senpara Parbota, Anwar Mansion, Mirpur Circle-10, Dhaka, Khandakar Md Noor Alm, Himel Enterprise (Ground Floor), 42/1-Kha, Segunbagicha, Ramna, Dhaka and Md Hasanuzzaman (Mithu), Sohan Garments, 393/36A, Gausia Market (4th Floor), Dhaka.

All seven will have the opportunity to travel Pattaya, Bangkok for three nights and four days with one person each as companion.

As a part of this programme Tajuddin Ahmed, Senior Finance Executive, Coca-Cola Far East Ltd, handed over a cheque for Tk 50,000 for the welfare fund of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust to Wahidur Rahman, General Manager, Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust.

The Coca-Cola Company has started this "Coca-Cola Fun Island" under the Crown Programme 2006 from April 10, 2006 and will continue till June 10, 2006. In this programme 50 lucky winners will have the opportunity to travel Pattaya, Bangkok for three nights and four days with one person each as companion.

'Women deprived of rights in absence of specific law'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In absence of specific law against domestic violence women are deprived of their rights in the society, said the speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They said as domestic violence is an unrecognised offence the women have to file case against dowry which is a clear misuse of existing law.

The discussion titled 'Responsibilities of the country and society to resist domestic violence: Bangladesh perspective' was organised by Action Network to Combat Violence Against Women (ANCVAW) at the National Press Club in the city.

Moderated by Executive Director of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) Sultana Kamal, the discussion was also addressed by women leaders Maleka Begum, Barrister Sara Hossain, Advocate Salma Ali of BNWLA and Dr

Nusrat Amin.

"A new law should be enacted considering the family structures of the society, and this should be implemented properly," said Nusrat Amin.

"It needs revision of existing civil and criminal laws before enacting a new law, and at the same time the enforcers must have minimum knowledge on those laws," said Barrister Sara Hossain.

"Almost 90 percent cases of torture are of domestic violence and it takes place at every level in the society," Salma Ali said, adding that the women should be given support service including psychological counselling.

She said a research should be conducted seriously to find out whether new laws should be enacted or the reformed laws would do the needful.

Citing the example of fatwa, Sultana Kamal said patriarchal society justifies domestic violence through it although it

is not exclusively private affairs.

"The issue of human rights is not a complex issue, rather the way of achieving rights is complex as the society and state is involved in it," Maleka Begum said, adding that it is the time to highlight the strategies to resist domestic violence.

Hosain Haque of ANCVAW read out the keynote paper defining domestic violence, its impact on women and the responsibilities of the society to combat the violence.

Khaleda Khatun of USAID, Nadira Malik of South Asia Partnership-Bangladesh, Zahura Fatema of Concern Women for Family Development, Mahbuba Mahmud of Naripakkha, Advocate Supriya Chakrabarty and representatives of different rights organisations were also present on the occasion.

Stackpole dismisses any plan of US military base in the bay

UNB, Dhaka

US General (ret.) Henry C Stackpole, who led a massive rescue mission following a catastrophic cyclone in Chittagong in 1991, dismissed any plan of the United States to set up a marine unit or base on the Bay of Bengal or its offshore islands.

"No, I don't see it happening," he said during an interview with the UNB at Hotel Radisson in the city on Saturday.

General Stackpole, now visiting Bangladesh to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the rescue mission 'Operation Sea Angel', observed that Bangladesh has enormously improved its capability of mitigating the suffering of humanity from any natural disaster, in terms of developing infrastructure such as cyclone centres and communication network, since 1991.

He said the civil society and the armed forces are now more capable of responding to the emergency needs for food, water and medicine for the victims of natural disasters.

"You've now more cyclone centres, which are being used for other purposes like schools and medical centres; you have better information technology and communication that gives early warning about any natural disaster."

Stackpole, however, said Bangladesh needs more resources like speedboats and helicopters for relief

and rescue operations and observed that the US government could look into this aspect of enhancing the country's capability effectively.

Besides, he said, the US has got high-technology warning systems, which could be shared with the scientists in Bangladesh so that loss from catastrophe could be less. "You can't prevent the act of nature, but a proper planning and mechanism could mitigate the loss in terms of life and property."

Asked about any possible US marine base on the Bay of Bengal for readily extending humanitarian assistance, Stackpole said the primary purpose of military is to ensure security and then to work on humanitarian assistance. Besides, he said, setting up any military unit is very costly.

"Through the Operation Sea Angel we've developed a principle of how to work in another sovereign nation," he said, adding that the US government would readily respond to Bangladesh's request in case of any major natural catastrophe since it is not possible for a single nation to cope with it.

On religious extremism, Gen Stackpole, who was also the president of the Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies, said terrorism is a cancer and a source of global concern.

He said most terrorist outfits, including the JMB, are local except for Al-Qaeda, Abu Sayeem group in the Philippines or Jamaat-e-Islam in

Indonesia.

The US general said the responsibility of a government is not only to curb terrorism but also to find out reasons why people are attracted to such devastating path.

"I see JMB lost much of its leadership as a result of good work done by the Bangladesh authorities and forces, but you can't be complacent as some elements might have slipped out to strike again."

He said the US and Bangladesh have ongoing cooperation in providing Bangladesh's police and military officers with support to enhance their capability of countering terrorism.

In reply to a question, Gen. Stackpole, who is also familiar with Bangladesh's politics, said he does not think that the Bangladesh army, which has great reputation in UN peacekeeping mission, would intend to interfere in the country's political affairs.

About the forthcoming elections, he hoped that political leaderships would be able to reach a mutual understanding so that people could vote to choose their next government through a free and fair election.

He said Bangladesh needs a long-term vision and checks and balances of the executive and the judiciary to achieve economic progress by combating corruption and illiteracy.

Director of the American Centre Jonathan Cebrera was present during the interview.

Khaleda greets Koirala

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday felicitated Girija Prasad Koirala for his appointment as Prime Minister of Nepal.

In a message, Khaleda expressed her hope that under the dynamic leadership of Koirala and with strong popular support he would be able to successfully guide the people of Nepal towards peace, stable democracy and economic prosperity.

As a close neighbour and fellow member of Saarc, she assured him that the government of Bangladesh would continue to work in close cooperation with his government towards further consolidation and strengthening of democracy and addressing poverty.

She also expressed her hope that the bonds of friendship existing between the two countries would deepen further in the days ahead.



Prof Husna Banu passes away

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Prof Dr Husna Banu, eminent educationist, writer, Rabindra Sangeet singer and former teacher of Home Economics College, passed away due to cardiac arrest yesterday at the age of 81.

She left behind her two daughters and host of relatives to mourn her death.

She was sister of late Fateh Lohani and Fazle Lohani and Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz is her son-in-law.

Her namaz-e-janaza was held at the Dhaka University central mosque after Asr prayers. She was laid to eternal rest at the Banani Graveyard.

BSS adds: President Iajuddin Ahmed expressed his deep shock at the death of Prof Husna Banu.

Iajuddin went to the resident of Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz to pay last respect to her.

He prayed for peace of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina also in a statement expressed her deep shock at the death of Prof Husna Banu.

Hasina, also Awami League President, prayed for salvation of her departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Mofizuddin Ahmed

BSS, Dhaka

Mofizuddin Ahmed, former superintendent of police (SP), passed away due to old-age complications on Saturday at his residence in Dhaka at the age of 80.

He is survived by his three daughters and a son.

His qulhwani will be held at 4:30pm today at House No. 46/F, Road No. 7 at Banani here.

Death anniversary

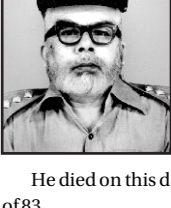


Today is the 21st death anniversary of Serajuddin Ahmed, founder chairman of Elite Paint Group of Company Ltd, says a press release.

Serajuddin, was also founder director of Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd, former president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries and former chairman of Tea Traders' Association of Bangladesh (TTAB).

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his Gulshan residence.

Abdur Rashid



The second death anniversary of Abdur Rashid, a retired senior assistant police commissioner, will be observed today, says a press release.

He died on this day in 2004 at the age of 83. Relatives and well-wishers have been requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

ARSON ATTACK Noor, Maya, Nanak, Azam get anticipatory bail

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail to 10 Awami League leaders and workers, including lawmakers Asaduz-zaman Noor and Mirza Azam, in an arson attack case filed by the government.

After hearing a bail petition filed by the accused leaders and workers, a division bench of the High Court comprising Justice MA Rashid and Justice Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan also issued a rule-nishi upon the government to show cause within four weeks as to why the petitioners should not be granted regular bail in the case.

The bail order will continue until submission of the police report in the case.

The petitioners, including Asaduzzaman Noor, MP, Dhaka City AL General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak and General Secretary Mirza Azam MP yesterday appeared in persons before the High Court bench for bail in the case.

Paltan police filed the case accusing them of obstructing the police in discharging their duties during the hartal programme on April 23.

Advocate Abdul Matin Khasru moved for the petitioners before the court.

20 injured as Shibir clashes with BCL

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

At least 20 persons were injured, 10 among them seriously, in sporadic clashes between activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on Chandpur Government College campus yesterday.

Sources said the clashes were the result of an altercation between two Shibir and BCL men in front of the principal's office on Saturday.

The BCL activists first attacked Shibir men in the college library yesterday, leaving district Jamaat-e-Islami leader Md Asifullah and Shibir activists KM Anwar, Mahbub Alam, Mosaddek Ali and Mainul Islam seriously injured.

This sparked chasing-counter chasing and clashes between the two groups.

Witnesses said some Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists joined the Shibir men at one stage.

Forces from the Sadar Police Station rushed to the college campus to control the situation.

Clashes also flared up on the Chandpur-Comilla Road.

At 2:30pm, three Shibir activists were allegedly attacked and seriously injured by BCL workers in front of the Sadar Hospital.

One Jamaat and seven Shibir activists were admitted to sadar hospital while three BCL activists were admitted to a private clinic. The condition of district Jamaat's Publicity Secretary Arifullah was stated to be serious.

Additional police forces were deployed on and around the college campus.

World Press Freedom Day on May 3

UNB, Dhaka

Journalists across the world will observe the World Press Freedom Day on May 3 to protest against persecution and harassment of their colleagues and closure of news media organisations in many countries.

The journalists will take a fresh oath to fight against those who are trying to curb press freedom. Nearly 500 journalists were arrested and jailed around the world in 2005, according to a statistics.

In a statement Sunday, CIA International President Hassan Shahriar said the scenario is the same in a number of Commonwealth countries where journalists have been protesting against violations by governments as well by others.

"The media cannot sit idle; it will continue to highlight governments' incompetence, corruption, mismanagement, lack of transparency and absence of accountability, no matter how draconian the rulers are," he said.

WEATHER TODAY Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squall wind is likely at one or two places over Sylhet division and the region of Mymensingh in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature.

Mild to moderate heat wave may sweep over Khulna and Barisal divisions and the regions of Dhaka, Tangail, Faridpur, Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogra, Chittagong, Noakhali and Comilla.

Highest temperature 40.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 21.5 degree Celsius at Teknaf, Srimongal and Bogra.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:27pm today and rises at 5:24am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 3 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening)